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VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

DEPARTMENT OF WOODWORK

THE PANELLED ROOMS

IV. THE INLAID ROOM FROM SIZERGH CASTLE

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Sizergh Castle from the South-east.

Frontispiece.]

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE panelled room, known as the Inlaid Room, removed from Sizergh Castle, Westmorland, was purchased for the Museum in 1891, and has been re-erected in Gallery 52 on the ground floor of the west wing of the Museum (No. 3-1891 in Museum Register).

The following history of the room has been compiled and the description written by Mr. H. Clifford Smith, M.A., F.S.A., Assistant Keeper in the Department of Woodwork. Special mention should be made of the articles published by Messrs. Taylor, Curwen and Bellasis in the 10th volume of the Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society, Mr. Daniel Scott's work, "The Stricklands of Sizergh Castle," and the volumes on "English Homes" edited by Mr. H. Avray Tipping.

Thanks are due to the late Mr. William Farrer, of Hall Garth, Carnforth, for his advice, and for the valuable assistance he rendered by the loan of his transcripts of the Sizergh deeds, and his copy of the manuscript volume entitled "An Abstract of the Ancient Writings belonging to Thomas Strickland of Sizergh, Esq.," made in 1778 by the Rev. Thomas West. Thanks are also due to Mrs. Tempest, of Broughton Hall, Skipton, for information relating to the families of Tempest and Boynton; and to the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, who has been so good as to examine the wood used for the inlay of the panelling and has kindly given an opinion as to its nature.

Since the first publication of this book in 1915, a few corrections and additions have been made based on information kindly supplied by Sir Gerald Strickland (now Lord Strickland), his son-in-law, Mr. Henry Hornyold, and Mr. W. G. Strickland, of Dublin.

ERIC MACLAGAN.

February, 1928.

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THE INLAID ROOM FROM SIZERGH CASTLE WESTMORLAND

(Date about 1575)

HISTORY

SIZERGH CASTLE, or Sizergh Hall, as it is sometimes called, is situated in the southern part of the county of Westmorland, on the borders of the lake country. It stands on high ground three miles south of the "old grey town" of Kendal, on the road to Levens, Milnthorpe and Lancaster, a conspicuous object on the right bank of the river Kent. The title is of Danish origin, derived from some female of the name of *Sigarith*,[1] and *bergh*, meaning a burial ground.

The prominent position of the castle is due to the fact that it was originally one of the ancient peel[2] towers erected in the wild Westmorland country. These strongholds served as dwelling-houses as well as places of refuge and defence against sudden raids and marauding expeditions. On either side of the Scottish border many of these towers, some in ruins, still stand isolated. But around others, such as Sizergh and Levens Hall, and still farther afield at Arnside, Borwick, Dallam and Turton Tower, manor houses have grown up in course of time.

[1] Mr. Farrer points out that Sigarith is the feminine form of the Icelandic or old Norse Sigar, a name which is variously spelled, as, for instance, in Sigeric or Siric, the Archbishop of Canterbury (990–995). A variant to Sigarith is Sigrid, the name of Canute's mother. Its modern Norse equivalent is Siegrit.

[2] Also spelled *pele*. The derivation is the same as the Welsh *pill*, a tower or fortress, and the Manx *peely*—the name of the town of Peel, in the Isle of Man, being also of this origin. The word *pele* referred to such border buildings as were fortified by means of poles, paling, or wood stockade. Such poles were probably removed later when sanction was obtained from the Crown to crenellate the building.

At the south-east corner of Sizergh stands the great peel (Frontispiece). In this was the Inlaid Room now removed to the Museum. The tower is practically the sole remnant of mediæval work found here, the rest of the buildings at present attached to it being mainly of Elizabethan date.

From almost its earliest history, Sizergh Castle has been the property of a single family. The manor of Sizergh at the end of the 12th century belonged to the Norman family of Deincourt; but by the marriage in 1239 of the heiress, Elizabeth Deincourt, to Sir William de Stirkeland (b. 1219, d. 1305), of Great Strickland,[1] in the parish of Morland, it passed into the family of Strickland, in whose possession it still remains.

The first stronghold which stood here was erected by the Deincourt family and surrounded by a pale stockade. The present tower was built on its site about the middle of the fourteenth century by Sir Walter, son of Sir William Strickland, who placed the coat-of-arms of his mother quartered with those of his father upon the front. Beyond traces of a 15th-century hall which exist on one side of the peel tower, nothing now remains of whatever buildings may have been erected at Sizergh during the course of the next two hundred years. In the time of Queen Elizabeth a remarkable development of domestic architecture and corresponding elaboration and luxury of internal work occurred in England. The altered ideas of comfort in the living rooms and privacy in the sleeping apartments called for additional accommodation, and almost every nobleman or squire of the country either rebuilt, enlarged or beautified his house. In accordance with this new standard of taste, the then owner of Sizergh Castle, Walter Strickland (1518-1569), the thirteenth in the pedigree, began to enrich with panelling, plasterwork, and stained glass the ancient border tower of Sizergh, and to transform the stern feudal dwelling into a stately Elizabethan mansion.

One of his first tasks was the alteration of several of the narrow Gothic windows of the tower, with their triple lights and trefoiled

[1] Stirckland or Stirkland means the pastureland of young cattle, or *stirks*.

and cusped heads, recessed deeply into the wall. The openings were widened by the insertion of rectangular stone mullions. Thus more light was afforded, and the effect of greater interior spaciousness produced.

External alterations and internal enrichments of other ancient fortified dwellings, similar to those of Walter Strickland at Sizergh and of his neighbour Sir James Bellingham at Levens Hall, were taking place in other parts of the country. The Earl of Leicester, for instance, introduced square-headed mullioned windows into the massive Norman keep of the Castle of Kenilworth ; while at Gilling Castle, Yorkshire, Sir William Fairfax, in 1584, not only removed the Gothic windows from the front of the great square Plantagenet tower, but also threw out a double-storeyed bay. The windows he filled with magnificent stained glass, and the great chamber with inlaid panelling, adding a rich ceiling and a deep frieze of moulded and painted plaster. Further allusion will be made to this "treasure of English interiors," now the dining-room of Gilling Castle, which presents so many interesting points of comparison with the Sizergh Room.[1]

ALICE, LADY BOYNTON.

In 1561 Walter Strickland married, as his third wife, Alice, daughter of Nicholas Tempest, of Stanley, co. Durham, and widow of Christopher Place, of Halnaby, Yorkshire. In all the decorative work of the next five and twenty years which was carried out at Sizergh, the hand of the energetic lady who presided as mistress of the Castle during that period is apparent.

Of the alterations which Walter Strickland and his wife Alice undertook, little seems to have been completed at the time of Walter's death in 1569, except the structural work of the wings which form the sides of the quadrangle, the mullioned windows of the tower, and one or two of the wainscoted rooms. The erection of a great part of the panelling, of which the various

[1] Tipping, H. Avray, *In English Homes*, Vol. III, p. 13. *See also* Bilson, J., *Gilling Castle* (Yorkshire Arch. Journ., Vol. XIX, p. 105).

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rooms of the castle possess a rich variety, and the construction of the Inlaid Room itself, were actually carried out by his widow. In 1573 she again married, becoming the fourth wife of Sir Thomas Boynton, of Barmston, Yorkshire. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth at Hampton Court in 1577, and died in 1582, when Alice Tempest became, for the third time, a widow.

Judging from the accounts that have come down of her, Dame Alice appears to have been a somewhat remarkable person. She showed herself to be a shrewd business woman, active in the management of the affairs connected with her estate, and the Sizergh muniments contain, in her clear handwriting, many a record of her rare capacities. Her sterling character is displayed in the care with which she watched the separate interests of the children of her several marriages, "without blending or prefering the interest of one venture to the prejudice of another." By the "integrity of her conduct and uprightness of heart," she left, says the chronicler, "to her posterity a rare example of female prudence."[1] She seems, moreover, to have possessed the same hearty passion for building and the same admirable taste for interior decoration as her famous contemporary, Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, better known as "Bess of Hardwick," a lady also much married, though of far less noble character.

In possession of Sizergh for her life, she proceeded with the building and the fittings that were left unfinished at the Castle. In 1573, prior to her marriage with Sir Thomas Boynton, she made an indenture with her son, the heir, whereby she agreed to purchase from him the timber, lead, iron, stone, glass, wainscot, and other building materials remaining at Sizergh which his father had bequeathed to him when he came of age ; and she reserved to herself the power of continuing therewith the work that she and her late husband had begun.[2] After her marriage with Boynton

[1] Abstract of Deeds at Sizergh Castle, by Rev. T. West (1778). 15 Eliz. No. 23.

[2] Sizergh Deeds. Elizabethan Bundle. No. 23.

she completed the Inlaid Room, placing her arms, with those of Strickland and Boynton, upon its ceiling. The date of the completion is unknown ; but it must have occurred before Sir Thomas's death, which took place in January 1582. Another panelled room, known as the Boynton Chamber, situated on the first floor of the main body of the house, was apparently finished about the same time as the Inlaid Room. It is decorated with lozenge-shaped mouldings somewhat like those at Gilling, and bears the Tempest and Boynton arms, with the date 1575. We may, therefore, place this year, 1575, as the approximate date of the Inlaid Room itself.

In 1586 Thomas Strickland, son and heir of Walter and Alice Strickland, attained his majority. On the 18th of January of that year he received from his mother "Alice, Lady Boynton of Rypon co. York, widow," as she is described, all the plate, furniture and household stuff belonging to Sizergh, of which his mother was to have the use until he came of age.[1] By a second deed dated two days later Dame Alice voluntarily released to him her right and interest in the "manor-house of Sisarghe, with all the buildings, etc. thereto belonging," which had been left to her for life by her late husband, Walter Strickland.[2] Dame Alice died in 1595, and her will was proved at York by her son and executor, Thomas Strickland, on March the 24th of that year.

THE INLAID ROOM

The Inlaid Room was situated on the second floor of the great peel tower. The tower, a massive, rectangular structure, with rubble walls, is 60 feet high, its exterior measurements being 60 by 40 feet. On one side is attached a projecting turret, known as the Deincourt tower, containing on each floor a small square apartment which communicates with the main rooms of the tower. On the other side a slightly projecting buttress encloses a circular stone staircase which runs up the building in the thickness of the wall.

[1] *Ibid.* No. 43. [2] *Ibid.* No. 45.

Both the buttress and the turret are carried up higher than the tower, which, with its two projections, is surmounted by a battlemented parapet. The walls on the second floor of the tower, as may be judged by the window recess of the Inlaid Room itself, are no less than 6 feet thick, while at the base of the tower they measure $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet in thickness. The ground floor or basement is entirely occupied by a cellar with a massive barrel-vaulted roof. From this the spiral stair gives access to the first floor. Here, in all probability, was the dining-hall of the owners of the castle at the time that the building was merely a place of defence. It was subsequently divided into two apartments, which were both sumptuously panelled in the year 1564. One of these is the present drawing-room, the other is known as the "Queen's Chamber," a title which is said to have been given to it on account of the tradition that Catherine Parr, daughter of Sir Thomas Parr, owner of Kendal Castle, lodged there when visiting the house. There is no record, however, that she ever returned after she became Queen; and as she died in 1548, she could not have occupied the room as at present arranged. The name of the "Queen's Room" is actually derived from the arms of Queen Elizabeth with the date 1564, over the mantelpiece. The royal arms, set up as a compliment or sign of loyalty to the sovereign, are found in other houses built or decorated at the period.

The spiral staircase continues to the second storey (Fig. 1). This floor at an early period may have been the lord's chamber. The greater part of the floor to the north-west is occupied by what is now termed the Banqueting Hall. At the farther end, however, to the south-east, separated from the hall by a partition, is a bedroom. The entrance to this, at the angle of the hall opposite to the spiral stairs, is by a corner doorway, which also gives access to the small apartment in the Deincourt tower. This room, now hung with tapestry, and possessing a richly plastered frieze and ceiling (*see page* 24, *Footnote*) was once lined with the famous inlaid panelling now exhibited in the Museum.

Its mullioned window commands to the southward an extensive view bounded by the distant ranges beyond Lancaster.[1]

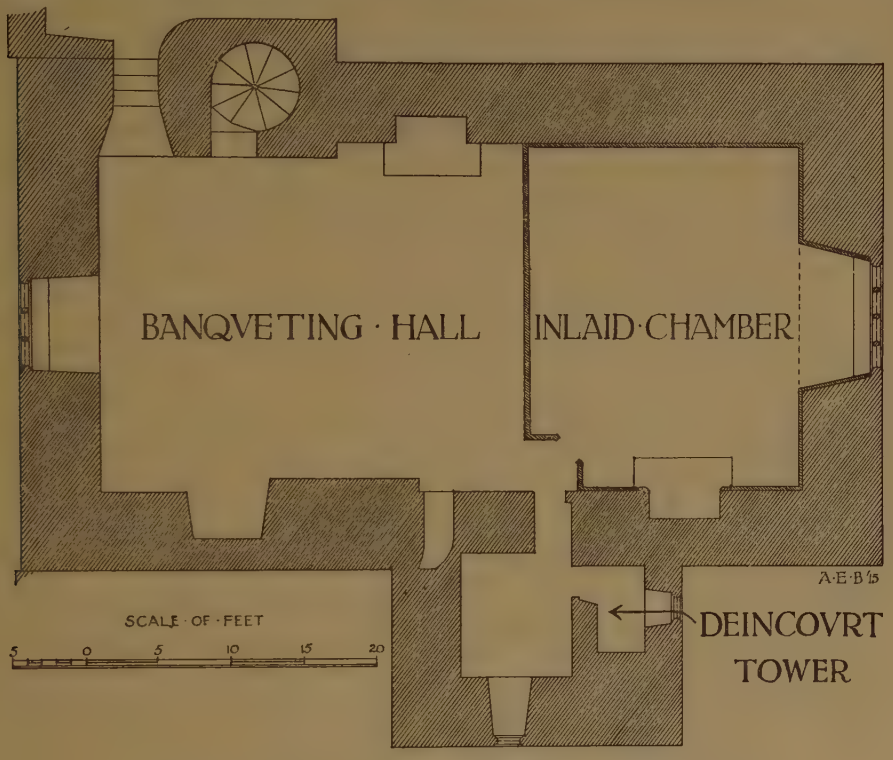

Fig. 1. Plan of the Second Floor of the Tower.

For generations it has been known as the "Inlaid Chamber." In the first half of the 19th century it had already acquired a considerable reputation as a model of artistic workmanship. Thomas Allom, an able water-colour painter published an engraving of the interior in 1835 in his *Westmorland and Cumberland Illustrated* (Plate I), and in 1849 it figured in the well-known work of Joseph Nash, *The Mansions of England in the Olden Time* (Plate II).

In 1891 Mr. Walter Charles Strickland, the then owner of Sizergh, announced his intention of disposing of the panelling ;

[1] The tower and this mullioned window can be seen in the view of the castle reproduced in the Frontispiece.

and the room, being actually in the market, was purchased by the Museum. Four roundels of glass from the window, and the bedstead, became the property of the Museum five years later.

The present owner of the Castle is Lord Strickland, of Sizergh, G.C.M.G., Chief Secretary to the Government of Malta; Governor of the Leeward Islands, of Tasmania, of Western Australia and New South Wales, Count della Catena in the island of Malta, Head of the Ministry in the Government of Malta.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ROOM

GENERAL.

The room is oblong on plan. Its dimensions are as follows :— Height, 12 ft. 6 in.; length, 24 ft.; width (excluding the bay), 19 ft.

In its original position at Sizergh Castle the long axis of the room lay north-west and south-east. In the middle of the long axis on the south-east side was the window, and, in the corner of the wall facing it, the projecting doorway. At the south-west end of the room was the fireplace, and against the opposite wall stood the bedstead (Fig. 2).

As set up for exhibition in the Museum the window now faces the west ; and the spaces in the present north wall formerly occupied by the fireplace as well as on the south side where the bedstead stood have been left open to allow a free passage through the room. With these exceptions, the room is covered on all sides with oak panelling, 10 feet 5 inches high, which reaches from the floor to the plaster frieze.

THE PANELLING.

The panelling is set out in bays divided by tall pilasters of crude Ionic form, each bay being again sub-divided into two sections, of similar design, side by side.[1] The whole comprises

[1] The fireplace and window openings are flanked each by a section or half a bay.

seven bays and four half bays of a section each. The sections are not all of precisely the same size, but vary slightly in width in order exactly to fill the wall spaces which they have been designed to occupy. Each section is arranged in two parts. The

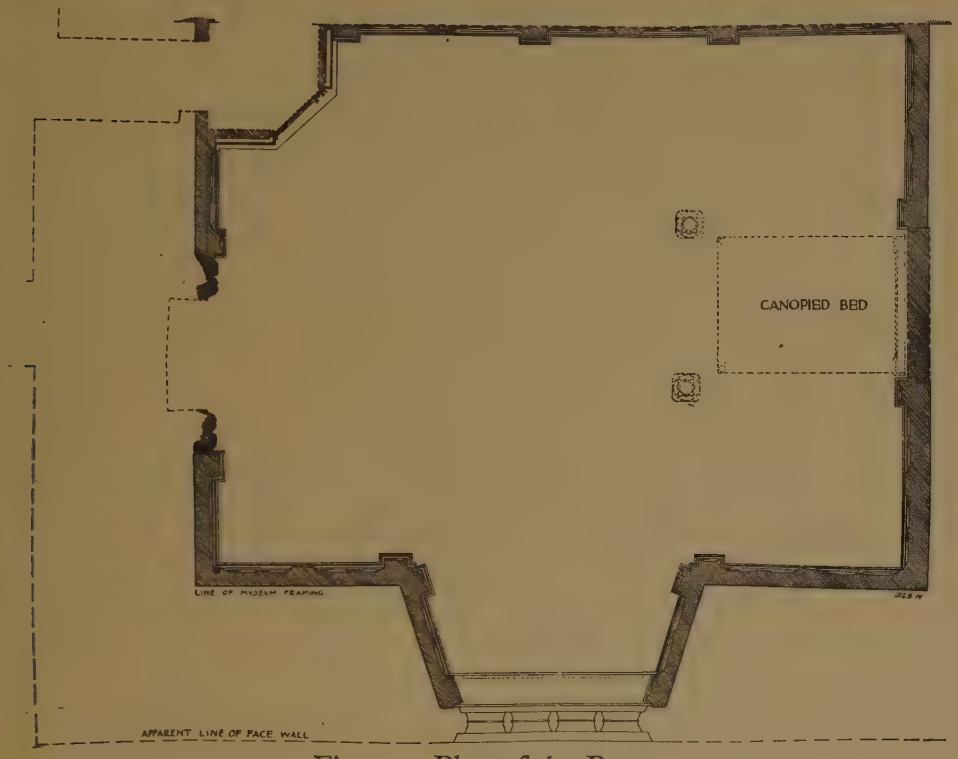

Fig. 2. Plan of the Room.

lower, or surbase, is composed of a panel enriched with mitred mouldings ; the upper is formed of a portion of an arcading which extends round the room. The two parts are divided by a surbase frieze inlaid with geometric designs, while similar inlaid bands, forming a frieze and skirting, run along the top and bottom of the whole panelling (Plates IV to VI).

The tall pilasters have their face panelled in agreement with the surrounding panels, and are surmounted by Ionic capitals. The pilasters are continued above the capitals, through the entab-

lature, to the moulded wooden cornice which encircles the room below the modelled plaster frieze that forms part of the ceiling.

The surbase, or dado, of each section contains one large panel measuring 2 feet 6 inches by 2 feet. To this are applied mitred mouldings so as to form a central oblong and four exterior angled compartments.[1] Mouldings mitred in the fashion of a square, rectangle, ellipse or circle, oval, or lozenge with segmental corners —the panel within panel type—are not infrequent in Elizabethan work; well known examples of the Sizergh pattern occur on the lower panels of the magnificent hall-screens of the Middle Temple, London,[2] and Trinity College, Cambridge.[3]

The upper part of each section contains a separate portion of the arcading referred to. It is composed of a single round-headed arch enclosing a pair of smaller arches with a circle between them, the whole resting on fluted pilasters, slightly tapering upwards, and having Ionic capitals.

This panelled arcading is one of the most striking characteristics of the room. Arcading of this nature is a development, in a more architectural form, of a species of enriched panelling, frequent in Elizabethan and Jacobean woodwork; and is made up of a series of sunk panels fitted with semi-circular heads which rest upon pilasters with imposts and bases. Such panels are commonly employed for chest-fronts and overmantels. They are also occasionally used for wainscoting, where they are generally found, as here, in a single row on the upper part of the panelling. But cases occur, as in the bays of the "Star Chamber"[4] at Bolsover Castle, the drawing-room at Langleys, Essex,[5] and elsewhere, where every panel is furnished with an arched head; while in the drawing-room at Quenby Hall, Leicestershire,[6] the four tiers of

[1] Forming what is known as "five panelled" framing.
[2] Tipping, *English Homes of the Early Renaissance*, Vol. I, p. LIV.
[3] *Ibid. In English Homes*, Vol. II, p. XXV.
[4] *Ibid. In English Homes*, Vol. II, p. 239.
[5] Tipping, *In English Homes*, Vol. II, p. 204.
[6] *Ibid. Early Renaissance*, p. 375.

enriched arcading are each of different design. The arcading at Sizergh is, however, of a far more finished and accomplished character. The ribs of the double arches and the circle above them have evidently been turned on a lathe. They bear a strong resemblance to stone tracery, such as is found on roundhead Italian windows. Two contemporary English examples of panelled arcading of similar design are known. One, which approaches very nearly to the outstanding specimen from Sizergh, occurs on panelling of the entrance hall at Tissington Hall, Derbyshire,[1] a house rich in varied wainscotings. The other, which forms an intermediate type between the various arched panels mentioned above and the arcading at Tissington, is in the drawing-room at Lyme, Cheshire.[2] In both these instances the arches are of interlacing design.

THE INLAY.

Apart from the remarkable arrangement of the panelling, the feature that gives to the room its peculiar distinction is the method by which the wainscoting is enriched. Instead of being adorned with carving—the more usual mode of decoration employed for English panelling—the woodwork is here inlaid. There are several instances of inlaid panelling of the early Renaissance in different parts of the country, but elaborate inlaying of this kind, though employed to a considerable extent in Italy and also in Germany, was comparatively seldom resorted to in England. Such inlay as is usually found on English woodwork of this time, on overmantels, bedsteads, chests and chairs, and occasionally on wall-panelling, consists for the most part of small panels and isolated sections. These are adorned with simple conventional flowers or thin strips of geometrical design in light and dark wood—generally holly and bog oak, while an occasional coloured wood, such as cherry, is sometimes introduced. In the present instance the panels of the arcading measure no less than 3 feet high and

[1] *Ibid. Early Renaissance*, p. 360.
[2] *Ibid. In English Homes*, Vol. II, p. 214.

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18 inches wide, and are completely covered with broad patterns of inlay. While the horizontal bands which encircle the room are inlaid with bold strapwork design.

The usual practice in vogue at this period for inlaying has been followed in the present instance. Slices of the woods, shaped with a saw, were laid on to the panels and marked round, and cells then cut—in this case to an eighth of an inch—out of the solid oak to receive them.

Two woods, poplar for the light and bog oak for the dark inlay, have here alone been employed. The light-coloured of these woods has hitherto been termed holly, and is so described in all the text books. But although some fragments of other white woods have been introduced from time to time by way of repair, the pale-coloured wood actually used throughout is poplar.[1]

The dark inlay is composed of a wood known as bog oak—sometimes called fossil oak. This wood, which is of unknown age, is found in submerged peat bogs, chiefly in Ireland, its shining black colour being due to the action of the iron salts of the peat mosses on the tannin contained in the oak. Bog oak, it may be observed, is a striking instance of the durable quality of the heart of oak, which, when seasoned, will last an indefinite period.

The channels of the fluted pilasters and the spandrels of the arches of the arcading are coloured with a black stain, and the surface of the vertical sunk panels which divide each section of the panelling is similarly treated. The staining was doubtless intended to imitate bog oak, and was not infrequently employed in Elizabethan work to imitate an inlay of dark wood. It was used by "Bess of Hardwick" for some of the woodwork at Hardwick Hall.

[1] A specimen of the light inlay has been submitted for examination to the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, who states that it is not difficult, from the structure of the wood in question, to distinguish it from holly and somewhat similar woods, such as lime, chestnut, and alder. The only possible comparison, it would appear, is really between willow and poplar; but the microscopic structure of the wood definitely excludes willow, and warrants a decision that the inlay is none other than poplar.

The inlay is of two kinds. Broad designs of conventional foliated scrolls, in the form of arabesques and strapwork, decorate the vertical panels of the arcading and the upper two horizontal bands, while thin strips of inlay are mainly employed on the panels of the surbase and the skirting band below.

Four varieties of design occur in double pairs on the arcaded panels. Two of these (Plates VII and VIII) alternate around the greater part of the room. A third variety—that bearing the fleur-de-lys (Plate IX)—figures on either side of the fireplace opening; and a fourth (Plate X), inlaid in the centre with a crescent, doubtless out of compliment to Sir James Boynton of whose arms it forms a part, is used for the panels of the window recess.

The central compartments of the mitred panels of the surbase are inlaid with upwards of a dozen varieties of leafy arabesques and interlaced geometric patterns; while the angled compartments, as well as the skirting band, are decorated with thin strips of inlay forming geometric devices.

No exact parallel can be found elsewhere to the broad, bold designs of the inlay of the arcading. A band of inlay, somewhat similar to the horizontal bands, runs above the interlaced arcading at Lyme (p. 17); and a corresponding decoration occurs in the drawing-room at Tissington—the house already noted as possessing, with Lyme, an example of interlaced arcading. In the dining-room of Sydenham House, Devonshire, the panels of the arcading and the frieze above are both richly inlaid with arabesques.[1] None, however, of these examples presents an exact comparison to the bold work here—from which, it is to be noted, arabesques of floral design are notably absent.

Thin strips of geometric inlay of precisely the same designs as those on the surbase of the panelling are, on the other hand, to be found elsewhere. Notable examples occur within the lozenge-

[1] Some of the inlay here has been restored. See *Country Life*, Vol. XXXVII, p. 175. 1915.

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shaped panels of the Great Chamber[1] at Gilling Castle (p. 9), and on the screen of about the same date erected by John Armytage at Kirklees Park, Yorkshire.[2] The similarity of the Sizergh inlay to that at Gilling and Kirklees may perhaps be explained by the fact that not only was Alice Strickland's first husband a Yorkshireman, but that Sir Thomas Boynton himself was also a native of that county.

THE PORCH.

The only entrance into the room was originally at one corner, through a specially constructed doorway with a domed turret, projecting, like an oriel, into the room itself (Plates I, XI, and XII). In rich Renaissance interiors, the doorway is generally an important part of the decoration of the room. In this instance it is in the nature of an internal porch or lobby, and forms an extremely notable feature of the room. Inside corner porches of this kind, enclosing the main door of the room and themselves provided with a door, were contrived in a certain number of large and wealthy houses either for the purpose of excluding draughts, and are thus commonly known as "wind-porches," or where the entrance to an important room was from a small stair landing. This arrangement was also convenient when, as here, rooms communicated with one another, and access to two rooms was desired without loss of privacy to one of them. Thus an entrance into the small apartment in the Deincourt tower (p. 12) could be gained from the Inlaid Room without passing through the so-called Banqueting Hall.

This device in planning originated in early Tudor times.[3] It is shown in contemporary plans, and exists in a number of houses

[1] The room is illustrated in *Details of Elizabethan Architecture*, by Henry Shaw (London, 1839), Plates 11 to 15. A large detail of one of the panels is given on Plate 12.

[2] Tipping, *In English Homes*, Vol. III, p. 29.

[3] Garner and Stratton, *Domestic Architecture of England during the Tudor Period*, Vol. I, p. 54.

mainly in the southern counties of England. Typical examples, often elaborately carved with figures and pinnacles, and associated, as in this case, with enriched panelling and ceilings of moulded plaster, occur at Bradfield, Devonshire, Broughton Castle, Oxfordshire, Stockton House, Wilts, the Red Lodge, Bristol, Bradninch, Devon, Lytes Carey, Somerset, and at Sherborne Castle, Dorset,[1] where one room is provided with the unusual arrangement of a pair of such doorways.

Great care has been taken in the present instance to make the porch as attractive as possible. It has been planned with considerable skill, and the work is a remarkable piece of joinery. It is half octagon on plan, and the front has the appearance of a three-sided cupboard with a door in the centre. The three sides are of the same design and size, and are composed each of two upright panels enriched with mitring of similar pattern to that of the dado of the room. The door is thus merely a portion of the panelling hinged. Above the panels is a fluted frieze surmounted by a cornice supported by modillions. The upper part of the structure, which rests upon this cornice, is formed, on each of the three sides, of an arched compartment, the centre occupied by a lion's mask with elaborate mane, carved in relief. It is set in an architectural frame, with base and complete entablature, supported by fluted columns with Ionic capitals. Above this, level with the cornice of the room, rises a dome, surmounted by a figure of a boy, 17 inches high, holding a shield in his left hand. The door is hung on "cock head" hinges of tinned iron.

This porch is a comparatively learned piece of designing. It is purer in style than the rest of the room, and its details present a more marked architectural character. It was probably the last detail of the room to be completed. Much of the ornamentation of buildings erected in England between 1550 and 1600 was borrowed from the illustrations of the Flemish and German pattern books, based for the most part on Italian models. The most

[1] Tipping, *English Homes of the Early Renaissance*, p. 149.

popular of these books of designs were those of Jan Vredeman De Vries, of Antwerp (1527–1608). One of his works, entitled "Differents pourtraicts de menuiserie," contains four plates of models for corner porches. These offer many points of comparison with the Sizergh porch. It is not impossible, therefore, that the craftsman who erected it had this work of De Vries before him.[1]

The super-structure of the porch bears a distinct resemblance to a pulpit, dated 1577, in the church of Worth in Sussex,[2] which is Dutch work, of the same architectural character, and furnished with columns at the angles. It is contemporary with the porch, and its design may perhaps be traced to a similar source.

THE WINDOW, GLASS, AND FIREPLACE.

This room is lighted by a window deeply recessed in the wall of the tower, which at this point is not less than 6 feet thick. The sides of the embrasure are splayed inwards, and the opening in front is 9 feet 4 inches wide. This opening, like the spaces originally occupied respectively by the fireplace and the bed on the north and south walls, is flanked by pilasters. The window, which is 7 feet square, remains in situ. Its framework is formed of four chamfered stone mullions divided by a transome into two rows of four lights (*see* Plate II). In each of the upper lights was set an armorial roundel of coloured and leaded glass. These roundels[3] three of which are of the same date as the panelling, and the fourth[4] some fifty years later,[5] were removed from the window in 1896, and purchased, together with the bed, by the

[1] These engravings, which were published at Antwerp, are undated. De Vries was residing at Antwerp from 1563 to 1570 and from 1575 to 1585, so that the publication presumably falls within one of these periods. If it belongs to the latter period, and served as a model for the porch, the porch must, as suggested, be later in date than the rest of the panelling.
[2] Figured in Gotch, *Early Renaissance Architecture in England.* 2 ed., p. 253.
[3] Nos. 87, 87*b*, and 87*c*–1896. [4] No. 87*a*–1896.
[5] The dimensions are as follows: Nos. 87, 87*b*, and 87*c*—Diameter, 9 in.; No. 87*a*—Greatest width, 8 in.

Museum. They have been reset in the upper lights of the window, the framework of which is a copy of the original in wood.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

The first roundel is emblazoned ; Quarterly, 1st and 4th, argent a fess dancetty between nine billets, four and five, sable, for *Deincourt;* 2nd and 3rd, sable three escallops argent, for *Strickland;*[1] impaling or five fusils conjoined in fesse azure, for *Pennington* (Fig. 3). The second bears quarterly, as before, *Deincourt* and *Strickland;* impaling quarterly, 1st and 4th, or three water bougets sable, for *Roos ;* 2nd and 3rd, argent two bars azure and a bordure engrailed sable, for *Parr* (Fig. 4). The third is emblazoned quarterly as before, *Deincourt* and *Strickland ;* impaling quarterly 1st and 4th, or three fleurs-de-lys argent, for *Beetham ;* 2nd and 3rd, or a chief dancetty azure, for *Burton* (Fig. 5, p. 29). The fourth (No. 87*a*) has a blue quartrefoil enclosing an oval medallion. It contained an armorial shield (now defective) bearing, argent two bars azure and in chief three escallops of the same, for *Hylton.* The shield is surrounded by a scrolled framework in yellow and blue, surmounted by two eagles' heads.

[1] This was the marshalling of the two coats borne by Sir William Stirkland (p. 8 *supra*), who in 1239 married the heiress Elizabeth Deincourt. (*See* Curwen, J. F., *Sizergh*, *No.* 2—In " Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society," Vol. X, p. 66.)

The stone fireplace remains in its original position at Sizergh Castle. It is a plain four-centred early Tudor arch under a square-headed moulding, and is some fifty years older than the panelling. A plaster mould of the stonework is preserved in the Museum. The original overmantel, of the date of the panelling. which was probably carved and inlaid, is unfortunately missing, having been replaced in the first half of the 18th century by a picture. It is to be noted that the pair of pilasters which flank the opening formerly occupied by the fireplace are of pine instead of oak. They date apparently from the same period as the picture (Plate I).[1]

THE CEILING.

The panelling does not extend to the ceiling, as in the case of the other rooms at Sizergh, but stops short by a foot, and thus space is left for a moulded frieze of plasterwork leading up to the richly decorated flat plaster ceiling.[2]

The frieze, which runs all round the room, is formed of a repetition of two designs—a demi-figure of a winged cherub with floral and leafy scroll work, and a square-shaped spray of conventional roses (Plates XI and XII). The design of the ceiling is composed of a number of small straight ribs set out in geometrical patterns. The moulding of single ribs of this type is simple in section. The subsequent tendency seems to have been to make the ribs gradually broader and of less projection until they became almost flat bands, frequently enriched, like the ribs of the ceiling of the Bromley Room.[3] The ribs radiate from various points throughout the ceiling, the intersection being marked by a down-

[1] A photograph (No. 356–1891) in the Museum Collection, taken before the removal of the panelling from Sizergh, shows more clearly the fireplace with the picture and pilasters.

[2] The frieze and ceiling, which form part of the room as exhibited in the Museum, are reproductions in plaster from the originals still at Sizergh Castle.

[3] *The Panelled Rooms in the Victoria and Albert Museum. I. The Bromley Room*, p. 15.

ward curve into flat pendants terminating in beautifully moulded finials. The pendants may in the first place have been suggested by the masonry pendants which characterise some of the finer Gothic fan vaultings.

The outline of the whole design is made up merely of a series of similar patterns. Each pattern is in the form of an octagonal star divided by eight ribs converging to the pendant in the centre. Eight kite-shaped panels are thus formed, their tails centring on the pendant (Plates XIII and XIV). These panels are decorated alternately with two designs—floral sprigs and conventional ornament. In the centre of each of the cross-shaped spaces which intervene between the octagonal stars is a circular wreathed medallion enclosing either a shield of arms or an heraldic beast. In the wings of each cross is a design formed of a fleur-de-lys and acorns, alternating with a rose within a circle of projecting fleur-de-lys.

The series of shields are three in number, and represent respectively the arms of Alice Tempest (Lady Boynton), the builder of the room; her late husband, Walter Strickland, of Sizergh; and her then living husband, Sir James Boynton, of Barmston. The arms are composed as follows:—

1. Tempest quartering Umfravile, or Umfraville.
2. Strickland quartering Deincourt, Neville and Ward.
3. Boynton quartering Old Boynton, De la See, and Monceaux.

The heraldic beasts are of two kinds—goats, and stags collared and chained. The goat forms the Boynton crest, the stag collared and chained appears to be derived from the supporters of the Strickland coat-of-arms (Plate XIII).

The part of the ceiling which covers the window recess is level with the bottom of the frieze. It forms a design complete in itself, and is made up of simple symmetrical ribs, the panels being interspersed with a variety of small modelled sprays and sprigs,[1] with the arms of Strickland in the centre (Plate XIV).

[1] These are figured in Bankart, *The Art of the Plasterer*, Figs. 259–264.

The pattern of the whole ceiling is really "of the simplest in structure; the richness of effect is derived from its frequent repetition and from the ornament in the panels. . . . The proportion is so carefully managed that the shape of the panels, which is the foundation of the design, is not obscured by the patterns which occupy them."[1] This ribbed plaster ceiling, which is a further development in plaster of that which is to be seen in wood in the Presence Chamber at Hampton Court, follows a type of design which is not uncommon in Elizabethan work. It resembles several of the ceilings put up at Levens by Sir James Bellingham in 1586; but the closest resemblance again is to the Great Chamber at Gilling Castle, the beautiful ceiling of which is likewise of fan and pendant type with heraldic beasts in the panels.[2]

THE BEDSTEAD.

The large canopied bedstead[3] which had stood for years in the Inlaid Room, occupying a vacant space in the panelling opposite the fireplace, was purchased by the Museum in 1896 (Plates I to III). It is supposed that the room was intended as the state bedroom of the Castle; and the bed is believed to have been set up in it by Lady Boynton as part of the original decoration. The bed was evidently designed in the first place to match the panelling. But it is obvious that it has, at some date—probably about a century ago—undergone a considerable amount of repair and alteration.

The head is composed of two rows of three panels, each inlaid with a broad strapwork design in walnut on poplar, and surmounted by a round arch supported on fluted pilasters. The panels are separated by stiles decorated with terminal figures, some of which

[1] Gotch, *Early Renaissance Architecture in England*, 2 ed., p. 205.
[2] Shaw, *Details of Elizabethan Architecture*, Plate 13.
[3] No. 86–1896. Height, 9 ft. 8 in.; length, 7 ft. 7 in.; width, 6 ft. 10 in. There is an illustration of it in Macquoid, "History of English Furniture". Vol. I. Fig. 66.

are restorations. Above each row of panels is a band of geometrical inlay in poplar and bog oak similar to that on the skirting of the room. The posts, which are of walnut, stand detached from the bed. They have fluted shafts, composite capitals and vase-shaped bases finely carved in the taste of the Italian Renaissance ; the panelled plinths, renewed with oak, were originally entirely made of walnut. The wooden ceiling which probably repeated the panelling of the room is missing ; and the cornice and frieze with the composition inlay are largly restorations. Above the cornice at the foot of the bedstead has been fixed a pediment-shaped carving in walnut. It bears the Strickland arms quartering those of Deincourt, Neville, and Ward, and the Strickland crest, a full-topped holly bush or tree proper. The carving is dated 1568—the year previous to the death of Walter Strickland—and probably formed part of an overmantel in one of the rooms completed in his lifetime. It is figured in its present position in Nash's drawing of 1849 (Plate II); and was evidently added to the bedstead at the same time as the moreen hangings, that is, in the early part of the 19th century.[1]

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The whole of the woodwork, with the exception of the corner porch, displays a marked independence of design and a certain neglect of the strict rules of the classical orders. The general conception comes from abroad, and foreign influences have made themselves felt throughout. The design of the porch is Flemish in feeling, but the motives of the rest of the work, especially the arcading, would seem, on the whole, to tend in the direction of

[1] No other furniture of the date of the Inlaid Room exists at Sizergh, but in the top room of the pele tower, above the Inlaid Room, is a group of early 17th-century oak furniture, including a set of short forms, about 3 ft. 6 in. in length, carved with various types of scrollwork. Several of them are dated 1628. A copy of one (No. 341–1891) is exhibited in the Museum. (*See* " Oak Furniture at Sizergh Castle," by H. Avray Tipping, in " Country Life," Oct. 30, 1926).

Italy rather than Flanders. The native craftsman has moulded these motives into new forms suited to his own country and his own nature. English work, indeed, has ever had its own distinctive mark, and whatever the native workman borrowed from abroad he has speedily made his own. A perfect understanding of composition may here be lacking, but the intermingling of native craft and foreign design has given to the work spontaneity of treatment and picturesqueness of effect, and has imparted to it freshness, vigour, and vitality. Coupled with this is an ordered richness and refinement of execution that is seldom found on native products of this age.

Local tradition at Gilling attributes the woodwork of the Great Chamber to the ladies of the family. This probably points to it having been done under their supervision by local workmen. A somewhat similar tradition, namely, that an apprentice at Sizergh served his time of seven years on the Inlaid Room, indicates that it, too, was executed by native craftsmen working on the spot.

The Sizergh documents throw considerable light on the personality of the lady who was responsible for the erection of this remarkable room, but they do not reveal the names of those who converted her ideas into concrete form. Her building accounts have not come down to us ; and, as in the case of the majority of the architects and craftsmen of the time,[1] the identity of the joiner who designed and executed the panelling of the room, the plasterer who modelled the ceiling, and the glazier who painted the roundels of heraldic glass is unknown.

Unlike much of the panelling of this time it has never been artificially darkened. The wood has retained its original surface, and its inlay has saved it from the 18th-century paint which so often obscures old panelling. Time has darkened the woodwork to a soft brown colour, has enhanced the rich feathering of the oak and mellowed the tones of the inlay. But in its pristine

[1] The building accounts of " Bess of Hardwick," published by Mr. Basil Stallybrass in *Archæologia* (vol. lxiv.), form a notable exception to the general rule.

state, the black and white of the bog oak and poplar, standing out in contrast with the pale oak of the panels, must have presented a very charming and delicate appearance.

The whole production is an exceptional, and, at the same time, a most interesting and valuable example of Elizabethan woodwork. The decoration is particularly lavish, and the added enrichment furnished by the inlaid patterns is carried out with a boldness and precision that has nowhere else been equalled. The artistic craftsmanship displayed throughout is worthy of the closest study. The work, as a model, is of special practical value to craftsmen-joiners and is rich in motives for the designer. It presents, above all, a striking demonstration of the possibilities of the use of inlay as a decorative medium.

H. CLIFFORD SMITH.

Fig. 5.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photographs are in the Museum Collection and can be seen on application in the Library. Prints from the official negatives may be purchased at the Photograph Stall in the Museum. The numbers in parentheses are those of the official negatives :—

INTERIOR OF THE INLAID ROOM BEFORE THE REMOVAL OF THE PANELLING.

View of the Room, by J. Nash (38717).

View of the Room about 1891 (39333).

THE INLAID ROOM AS EXHIBITED IN THE MUSEUM.

General View of the Room (38719).

Details of the Panelling.

- The Corner Porch (17443).
- A Bay (38720).
- The Window Recess (38721).
- Section of Panelling in Window Recess (13377).
- Four varieties of Inlay of the Arcading (13375, 13376, 13378, 13379).

The Ceiling.

- General View (35229).
- General View 35230).
- Detail (38718).

Roundel of Glass, No. 87—'96 (38725).

Roundel of Glass, No. 87*b*—'96 (38726).

The Bedstead, No. 86—'96 (35228).

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[Figs. 148–150, 251, and 257–264. Illustrations of Ceiling, Frieze, and details.]

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[Fig. 66. Illustration of the Bedstead.]

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[Plate facing p. 252. Illustration of the Room before the removal of the Panelling.]

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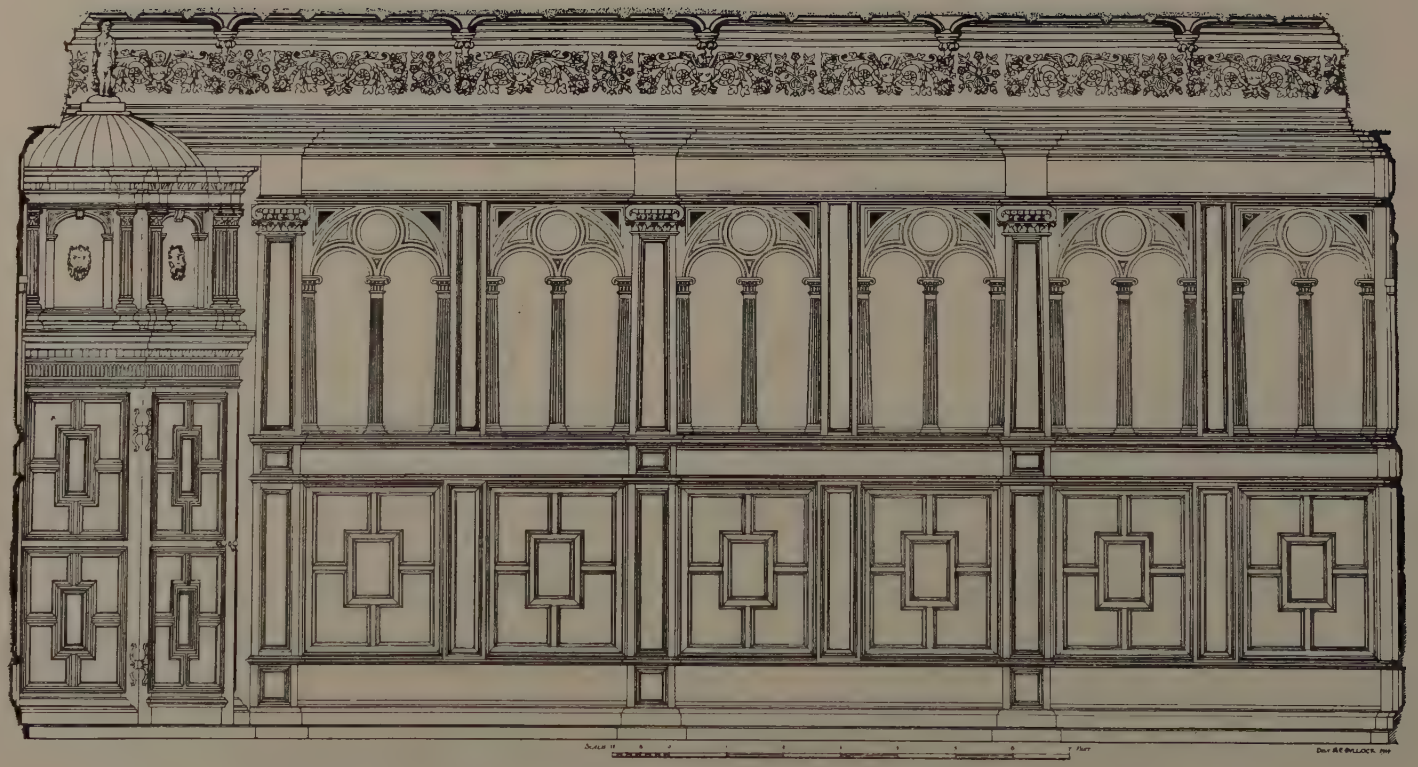
View of the Inlaid Room in 1835.

From Allom and Rose's "Westmorland and Cumberland Illustrated."

View of the Inlaid Room in 1849.
From Nash's "Mansions of England."

General view of the Inlaid Room in the Museum.
[The Bedstead at present is exhibited outside the Room.]



Measured drawing of the Wall facing the Window (*see* p. 14).

Detail of the Panelling, showing one complete Bay (*see* p. 14).

Measured drawing of detail of Panelling, showing one complete Bay (*see* p. 14).

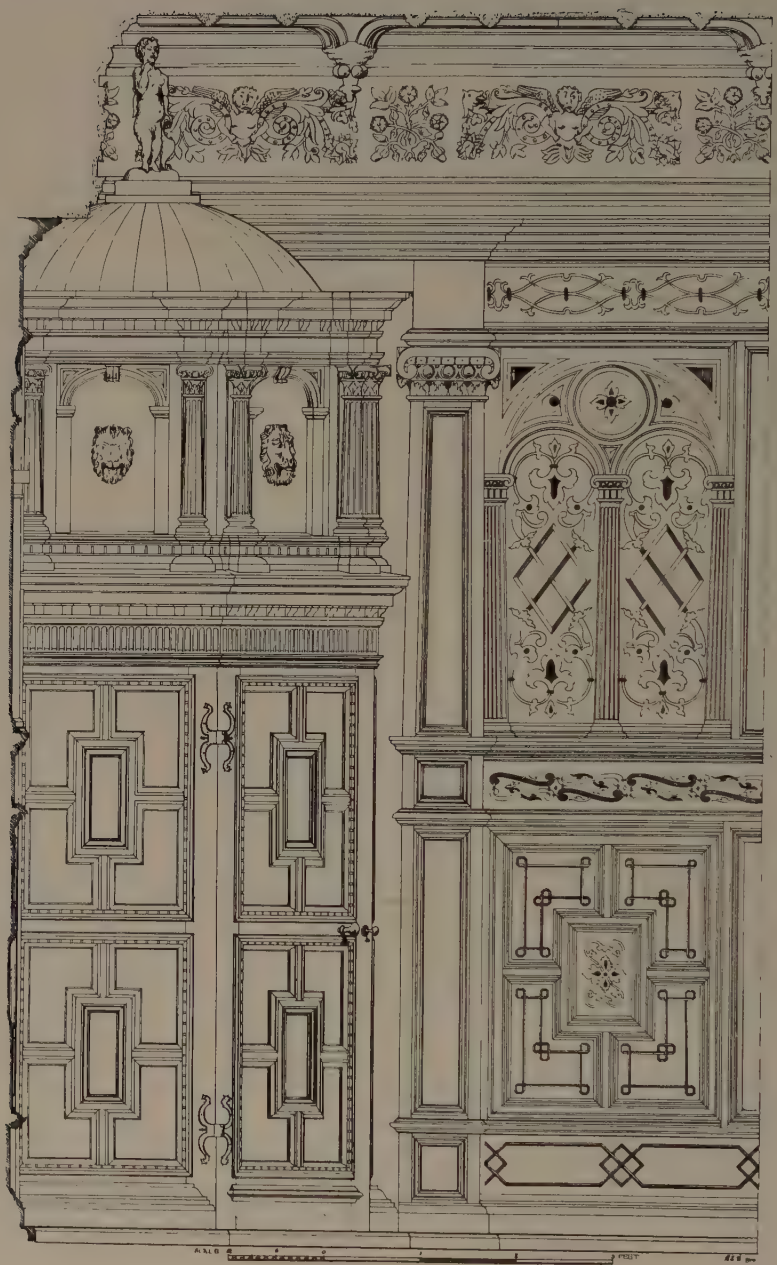
Detail of Inlay in the Arcading (*see* p. 19).

Detail of Inlay in the Arcading (*see* p. 19).

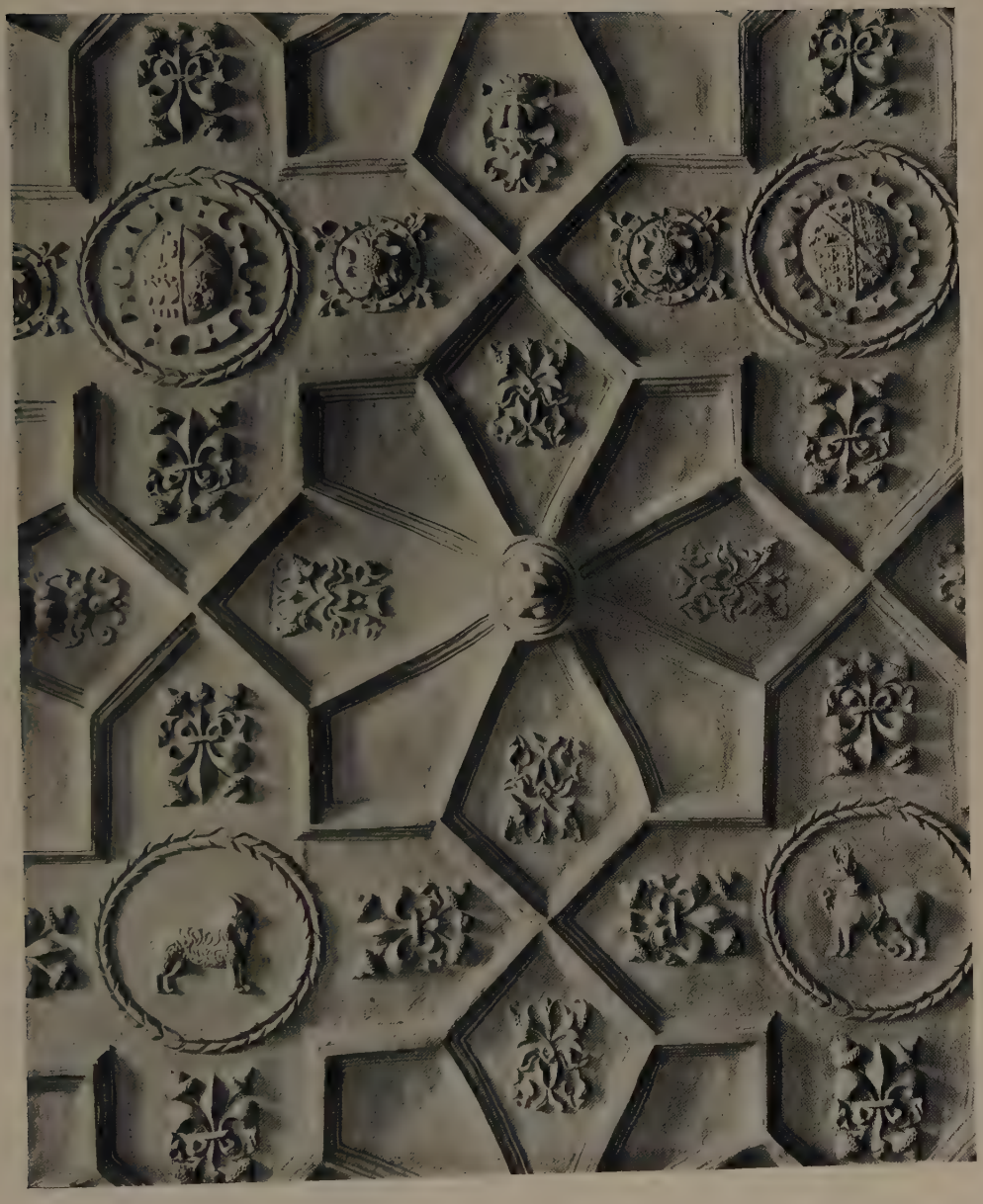
Detail of Inlay in the Arcading beside the Fireplace Opening
(*see* p. 19).

Detail of Inlay in the Arcading of the Window Recess (*see* p. 19).

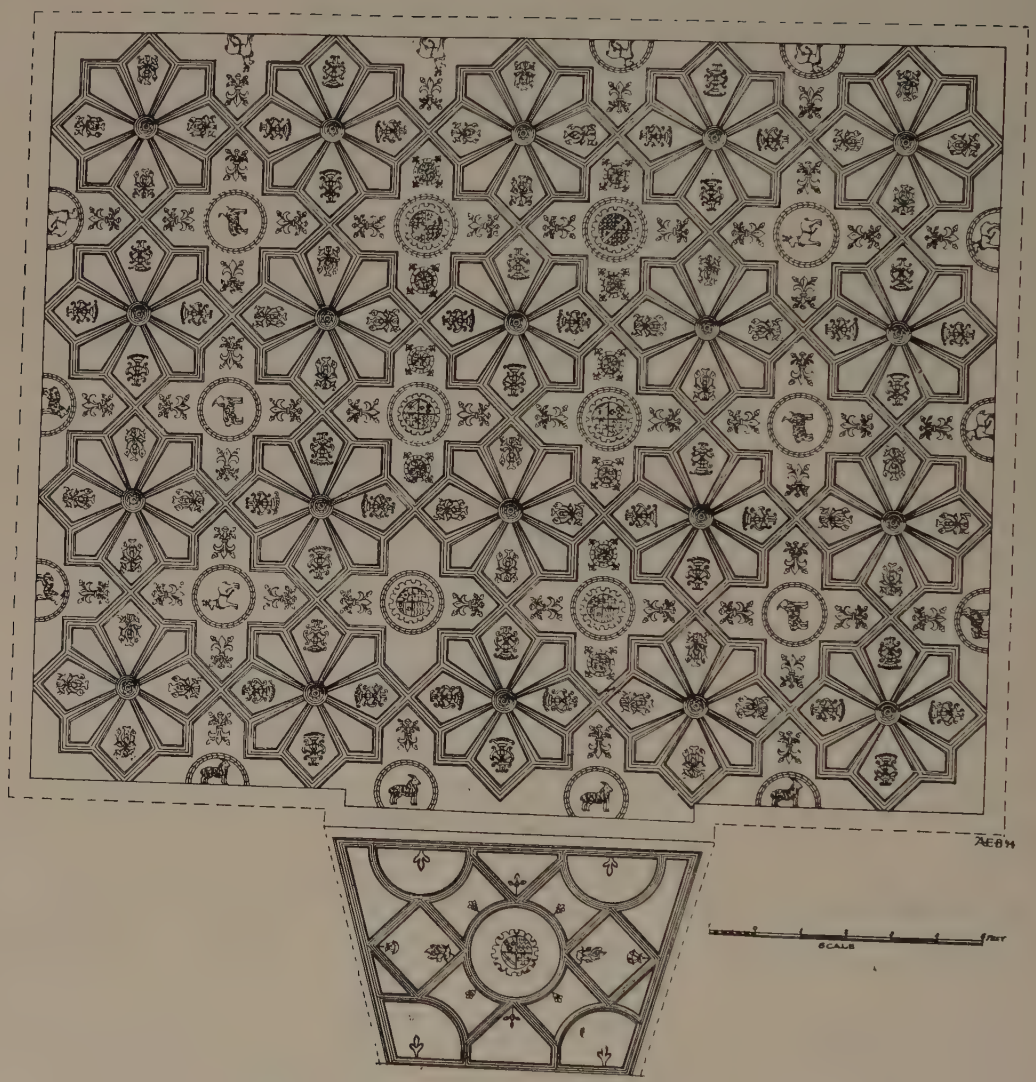
The Corner Porch (*see* p. 20).



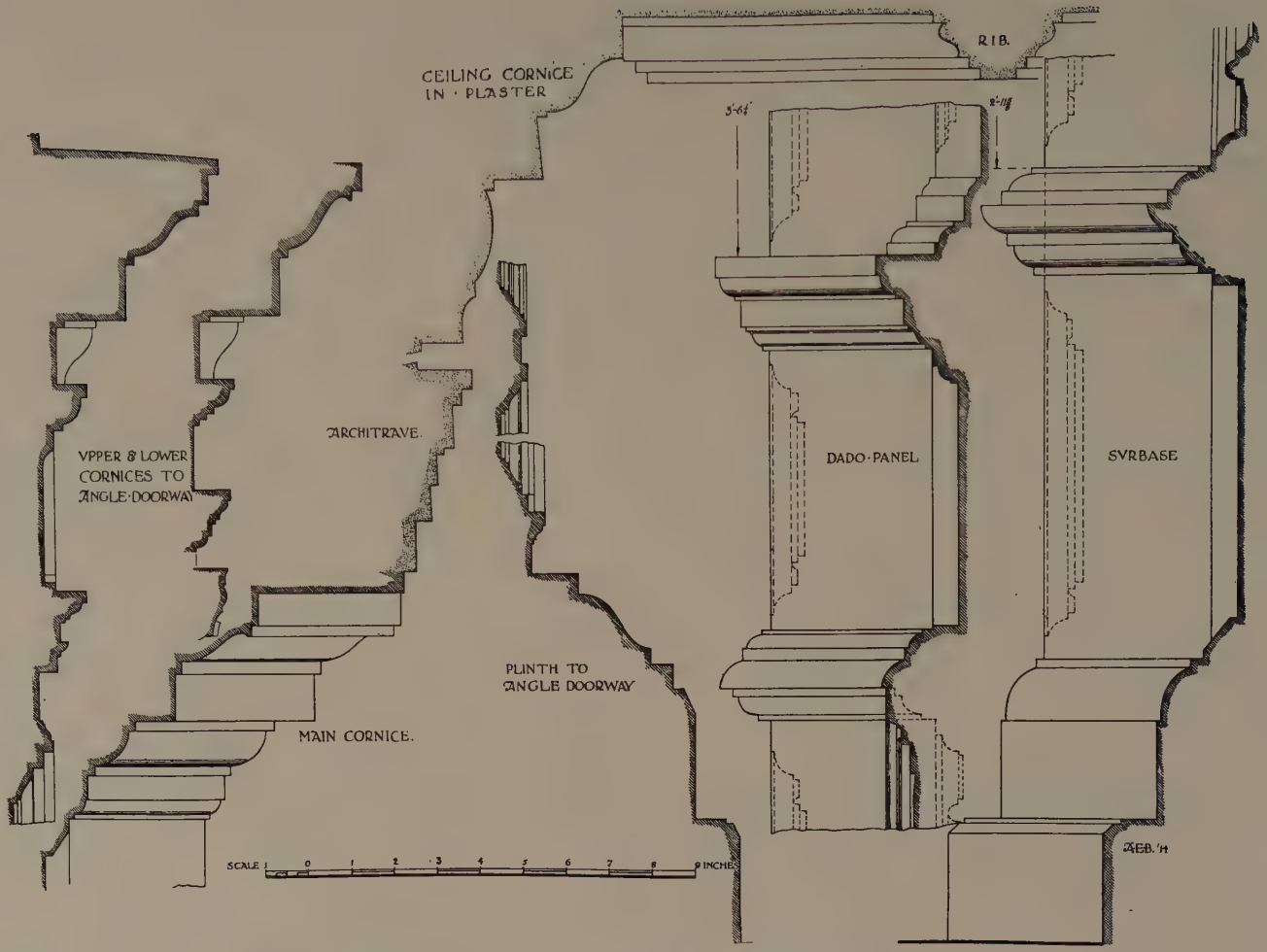
Measured drawing of the Corner Porch (*see* p. 20).



Detail of the Ceiling (*see* p. 24).



Measured drawing of the Ceiling (*see* p. 24).



Measured drawings of details of Mouldings.

PLATE XV.

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For the portfolios of reproductions of **Measured Drawings of French Furniture** published by Mr. W. G. Paulson Townsend, and for the plates of **French Wood Carvings,** published by Messrs. B. T. Batsford, Ltd. *see* List 2a.

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